

Everyone Wants a Slinky

“Benson....Benson” The boy turned at the sound of his name, sending his shaggy blond hair flipping to the side of his forehead. His crystal blue eyes darted back and forth across the brightly painted walls, trying to find the source of the voice. He had heard it many times before, but this time was different. This time the voice wasn’t inside his head. But before he could locate it, the door across the room opened and two young girls walked in.

“Benson!” They both yelled and ran to embrace him. Lily, only four, could reach high enough to wrap her arms around her eight year old brother’s thighs, while Samantha, eleven, could fully embrace them both.

“Benson! You get to come home today!” Lily sounded so pleased with herself, like she was the reason that he finally got to leave the place he hated most. She then started running around the room pulling her little brown pigtails out to the sides of her head like airplane wings. Samantha walked over and took hold of Benson’s hand in hers, giving it a tight squeeze.

“Mommy says that you’re all better now, that the bad thing left and will never come back, that the doctors made sure of it.”

“If only it were that simple, Sam.” Benson whispered just loud enough for her to hear.

Before Samantha could question him further, the door opened once again. Lily dropped her pigtails and ran to her mother’s feet. Mrs. Reilly picked her up

and walked over to where Benson and Samantha were still holding hands. They now let go and looked up, waiting for whatever their mother had to say.

“You’re going to come home with us today, Benson.” A smile gleamed across her face as she looked down at her son’s questioning eyes. “The doctor’s have cleared you and said that you’re all better and can come back home.”

“But what about the voice?” Benson wearily asked

“What voice?” Mrs. Reilly’s smile had quickly vanished and been replaced with a look of worry

“Uhhh...”

“Wait here with your sisters just a minute, Benson.” Mrs. Reilly quickly walked into the hall, shutting the door behind her. She approached the nearest doctor and Benson, Lily and Sam crouched next to the door to listen.

“Benson said he heard a voice. I thought you said that his schizophrenia was cured?”

“It is very common for the child to pretend to hear or see things to try and obtain a sense of normality for them. It is nothing to be concerned about, Mrs. Reilly.”

“But Doctor Radner, what if more symptoms occur? What am I supposed to do? Bring him back here for more treatment?”

“IF anything more occurs I would advise you to bring him back here just so that we can run some tests and check for other signs that the disorder is returning. However, that is not likely to happen. All you have to do is keep him in your sight and try your best to treat him the same as Lily and Sam.”

“Yes, I understand. Thank you.”

The three children quickly receded from the door as their mother made her way back to the room.

“Alright Benson, we’re all set to go now.” She took her son’s hand and led her three children down the hall to the front doors. Once they were in the parking lot, Benson couldn’t help but turn around. He couldn’t believe that after four long months, he was finally leaving Lundenbrook Mental Hospital for good.

“It was about time.” A low, smooth voice crawled towards Benson’s ear.

“What?” Benson turned his head towards his mother.

“I didn’t say anything, honey.” The worried look on Mrs. Reilly’s face hadn’t been completely erased yet.

“Oh, um, nothing,” Benson muttered under his breath. He knew that it wasn’t his mother that had said something. It was the voice again, and it was coming from inside his pocket. He reached his hand in the pocket and curled his fingers around his small rainbow slinky.

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“Why don’t you go find your pretty sister, Samantha? I’m sure she’d love to go swimming.”

The voice came suddenly from the slinky he was holding in his hand. His fingers curled around it wondering what exactly was going on. But he got a strange feeling inside, more like an urge, to follow the voice’s command. Benson

got up from where he was sitting in his chair beside the pool and walked towards the diving board where Samantha was preparing to dive. He placed the slinky down on the grass as he approached her from behind.

“Perfect day for a swim.” The voice that spoke was not Benson’s although it came out of his mouth.

“Um, ya.” Samantha gasped one last time before Benson saw his hand push her face roughly into the edge of the diving board, sending her down into the water below.

“Very good.” The voice whispered once more. Samantha began to slowly sink to the bottom of the deep end and Benson gasped as the voice left and he realized what he had done. He dragged his sister out of the water and screamed out for his mother.

“What happened?!!!” Mrs. Reilly was bawling, clinging Samantha’s wet body to hers. “Benson! What happened?!!”

“She just....just...went under anddidn’t come back up.”

He turned away from the sight of his sister’s dead body and looked towards the grass where he had left his toy. It was gone. Benson ran into the house only to find Lily sitting on the living room floor playing with his slinky. Its rainbow colors flashed once and then turned a shade of dark crimson.